

## Musgrave rebukes petitioners Grassroots group wants Iraq war delayed

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An effort by a grassroots Internet organization to raise awareness of opposition to war in Iraq drew a terse response from U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave on Tuesday.

The organization -- MoveOn.org -- visited Musgrave's office in Loveland on Tuesday as well as all congressional offices nationwide in an orchestrated show of opposition to the Bush administration's plans to invade Iraq and remove Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from power.

MoveOn.org also presented a petition with the signatures of approximately 1,100 residents from Musgrave's 4th Congressional District who are opposed to war with Iraq. Musgrave was in Washington, D.C., though, so her chief of staff Guy Short accepted it in her absence.

Those who signed the petition included Fort Collins City Councilwoman Marty Tharp and Tom Sutherland, a former CSU professor who was held hostage in Beirut, Lebanon, for 6 1/2 years.

A couple of hours after the gathering at her office, Musgrave issued a statement sharply criticizing the petitioners.

"I strongly disagree with the sentiment expressed by MoveOn petitioners that the United States is a 'rogue nation,' an 'international bully,' or that we can deal with a brutal dictator like Saddam Hussein by 'playing to their divine wisdom and higher self,'" Musgrave said in the statement. "We didn't deal with mass murderers like Hitler by appealing to 'higher self.'"

Musgrave backed off her criticism slightly by adding her feelings on the issue are tempered by her son being in the U.S. Navy.

"Supporting military action in Iraq, therefore, is not only an issue I must face as an elected official, but also with a heart of a mother," she said.

Musgrave's criticism of the petitioners, however, didn't sit well with Tharp and Sutherland.

"It's a legitimate concern," Tharp said. "That's why I signed it. I've seen too many 18-year-olds sent off to be killed. I also have a strange concern. Why can North Korea be a bigger bully and we do nothing, but Iraq we want to blast off the face of the earth? I just can't see the logic."

Sutherland also was upset with Musgrave's stance.

"I'm absolutely concerned about this," Sutherland said. "I not only signed (the petition) and explained my reasons, I gave (MoveOn.org) money, too."

"If we go out and attack Iraq, and oust Saddam, it will be a sitting-duck situation like before. ...American boys and girls and maybe some Brits ... all will become targets for terrorism."

"If we do this, no Americans will be safe anywhere."

Sutherland said while he agreed that "Saddam Hussein is a bad man," the Bush administration has not made a convincing case that "he's a threat to the U.S. or the world. I'm saying, there's no way he's a threat."



V. Richard Haro/The Coloradoan

**WAR OPPOSITION:** MoveOn.org spokesman Steve Collins, second from right, on Tuesday gives a petition with approximately 1,100 constituent signatures to Guy Short, far right, chief of staff for Rep. Marilyn Musgrave. The petition asks Musgrave to push President Bush to delay war with Iraq.